

DUXBURY REPORTER

DUXBURY FREE LIBRARY

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Lynn Walker of Duxbury
at Duxbury Free Library

PHOTO/LAURA SINCLAIR

inauguration of President of Barack Obama. For more photos from the gathering
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Gathering to watch history

Library
hosts inauguration
viewing party

By Ruth Thompson
CORRESPONDENT

"I think this is monumental for a lot of reasons. I've been so excited. I'd be watching it alone at home, so it's nice to be here watching with other people."

Diane Mahony

They came with feelings of anticipation and celebration.

There was a shared sense of community and camaraderie stretching from the retired octogenarian ambassador to

the youngest of children. They all came to witness history in the making, as they gathered in the Merry Room at the Duxbury Free Library to watch the swearing-in of Barack Obama as the

44th president of the United States.

Duxbury resident Diane Mahony, 55, said she had dropped off her son at school for midterms and decided to head over to the library to watch the ceremony.

"I think this is monumental for a lot of reasons," she said. "I've been so excited. I'd be watching it alone at home, so it's nice to be here watching with other people."

A flight attendant, Mahony said she "really wanted the day off" so she could enjoy watching all of the inaugural celebrations.

"I just texted my son to let him know I'm over here," she said. "I hope he's able to see some of this."

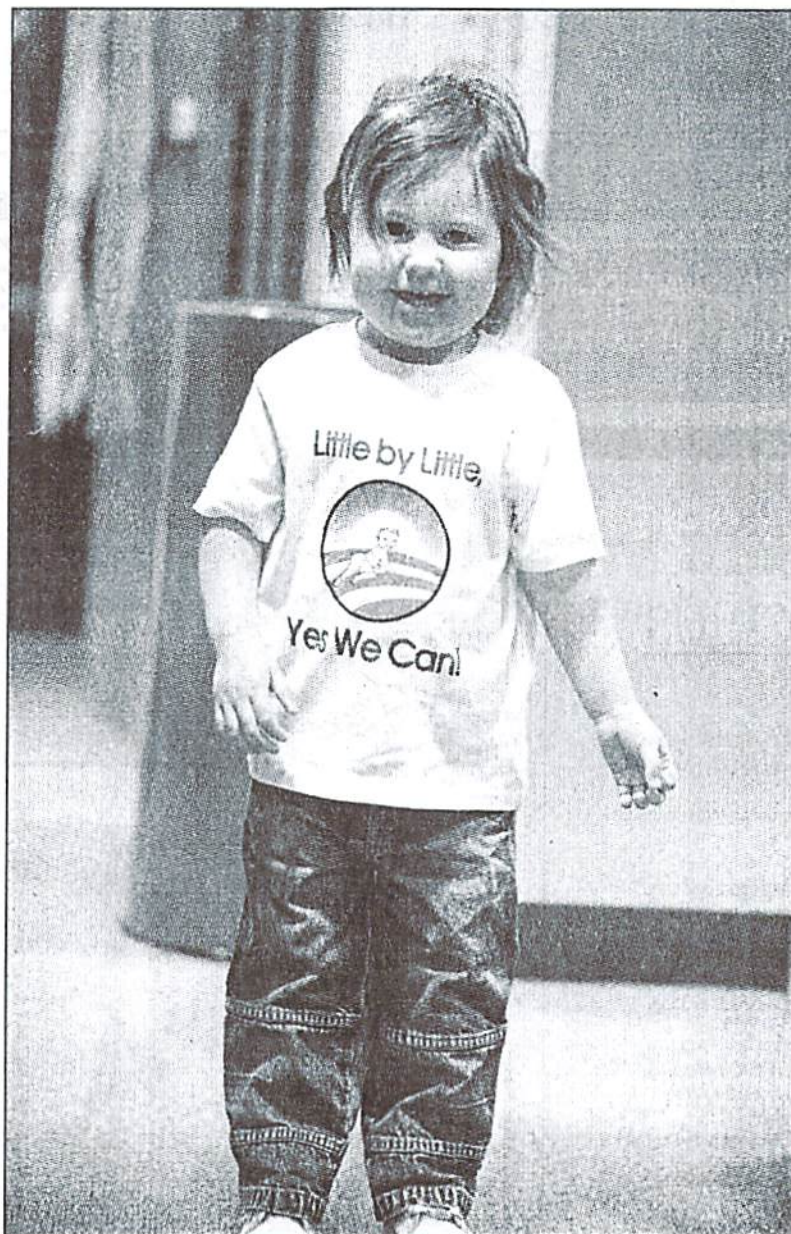
Mahony said if her son didn't have midterms, the two of them probably would have gone to Washington, D.C., to stand among the estimated 1 million spectators.

"I have friends in Washington," she said.

Mahony also has a nephew who got tickets to the event.

"He's a student at George Washington University," she said. "He's studying political science. He has connections. It was perfect timing for him to be able to go. He definitely wants to get into politics someday. He'll remember being there for the rest of his life."

Located in the lower level of the library, the Merry Room was set up for amphitheater-style seating, with the chairs all facing a large movie screen. Refreshment tables were lined up against a far wall, and patriotic streamers and decorations of red, white and blue were wrapped around banisters. A framed portrait of President Abraham Lincoln rested on a table before a large bouquet of flowers and a cardboard display of Obama and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Computers were set up in case anyone cared to add to the library blog on the inauguration.



PHOTO/LAURA SINCLAIR

One-year-old Libby Dennison of Duxbury shows off her "Yes We Can" T-shirt.

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Gathering to watch history

FROM INAUGURATION, PAGE 1

"I am very happy with the turnout," said Ellen Snoeyenbos, the library's young adult librarian, who along with Nancy Landgren organized the inauguration get-together. "We knew there would be a lot of interest. She and I felt we should have a civic event around the inauguration, a nonpartisan event where everyone would feel comfortable."

At the time of Obama's speech, there were approximately 75 people watching in the Merry Room. Even those who were unable to cast a vote for Obama in Duxbury turned out to show their support.

"I think it's wonderful," said Ron Chapman, 74, a native of Scotland who resides in Marshfield. "This is a big change. Obama has the right idea. He's a guy who writes his own speeches. I think it's marvelous."

Nine-year-old Libby Bullinger of Duxbury won't be old enough to vote for a while, but she already possesses a keen knowledge of inauguration practices.

"There are only 35 words in the president's oath of office," she said. "But they're very important."

Libby, who was at the library with her mother Anne, thought the whole thing was "really cool."

"I just left school," she said. "I thought the next time I see my friends we will have a new president."

Elizabeth Murphy, 14, brought her friends along to watch some of the ceremony. Michaela Lake, Katelyn Widzins and Becky Buckley, all 14 and Duxbury High School students, sat together at the back of the room.

"We had a half-day today," Elizabeth said. "My mom told me they'd be showing it here. It's kind of cool. It's a memorable event, something really historic."

Katelyn said she was "kind of curious" to see what was going on, while Becky said she wanted Obama to win.

"I'm here as a supporter," she said.

It was a festive, excited crowd that applauded at the sight of former President Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn arriving at the presidential box, and who cheered



PHOTO/LAURA SINCLAIR

Ellen Snoeyenbos, Denise Garvin and Nancy Landgren man their computers while live-blogging the inaugural ceremony.

Country, "Tis of Thee."

Duxbury resident Amy Tull, 54 also said she preferred to watch "such a historic moment" among other people than at home. Tull said she has watched every inauguration except the last one, but said, "This one is magical."

"All inaugurations are special whether you agree with the politics or not," she said, adding that the "peaceful transition of power is something everyone should see."

"It's always emotional no matter who it is," she said. "I'm sure there will be a lot of tears in this room."

The potential for tears was something Landgren and Snoeyenbos anticipated.

"We've put out boxes of tissues; we tried to think of everything," Landgren said.

Landgren, a community organizer who does social justice work through her church, the First Parish Church, Unitarian Universalist of Duxbury and the South Shore Citizens for Peaceful Solutions organization, said she wanted to feel "connected" with the rest of the world on the special day.

"Today the world is watching," she said. "The tone of what our position in the world is will be different from now on."

Reference librarian Denise Garvin could scarcely contain her enthusiasm.

Garvin said she "has hope" Obama will bring about great change.

"He's just what we need—fresh blood and fresh ideas," she said.

Parviz Adle and his wife Ellen De Bard sat at a table up front surrounded by friends. Adle, 85, was born in Tehran but said he was "very proud" to watch the inauguration as a citizen of the United States.

"I am now an American and I'm interested," he said.

Adle, a former ambassador to Canada and Brazil who was the counsel general under the last Shah of Iran, said he thought Obama seemed "very capable."

"I hope he succeeds," he said.

Adle and De Bard said they are both "ardent supporters of Obama."

"It's such a special moment in history to share with other people," De Bard said. "It's just joyous."

Forty-somethings Brian and Laurel Lies have their own special Obama moment they will likely never forget. The Duxbury residents had a chance encounter with the then-relatively unknown Democrat during a layover in Chicago while on a flight from Boston to Minnesota.

"This was right after the 2004 Democratic convention," Brian said. "We were on the plane that took the entire Illinois delegation."

While waiting around at the air-

"I wanted her to meet him because I had a feeling that one day he'd be president of the United States," he said.

The Lieses said the future president was standing by himself talking on a cell phone. They're not sure if it was Laurel on crutches that caught his attention or the obvious fact that they were waiting for him, but after wrapping up his call, Obama approached them and extended his hand to Maddy.

"We were so excited," Laurel said. "You could tell just by the way he was with our daughter that he was a good man."

The Lieses have been supporters ever since.

"This man represents everything we believe in," Laurel said.

Brian said he was struck by Obama's simplicity.

"He didn't have an entourage," he said. "He was just an ordinary guy on a cell phone."

"A handsome guy on a cell phone," Laurel added.

Now this ordinary guy is the leader of the free world with a great deal of hope riding on his shoulders. Amid the tears and the hugs and the clapping in the Merry Room, Obama's vision of change and of making a positive difference seemed contagious.

"I thought his speech was great," said Landgren. "It was very emotional and exactly what we need."

Making reference to Uncle Sam, Adle said he has a wish that America "becomes uncle of all nations."

"But not an Uncle Sam with a stick but an Uncle Sam of love," he said.

Snoeyenbos, who said her goal was to see the library as a sort of "community commons," said she was very impressed by Obama's speech and the meaning the derived from it.

"He really hit the nail on the head," she said. "He's calling us all to a higher service, to look outside ourselves."